

from her she turned the heads & saddened
the hearts of men."

And Helene she was called, though at the name
her father's face fell, for he thought it an unlucky
omen for the future of his child.

"Be not dismayed at a name:

fortune shall bring thee, but never shame.

And the sorrow shall pass in joy!"

Hall turned sharply back when this whisper
plunged-came from, where by his side
was Merlin, dreaming the carving of beams
weighed had no mind for anything else.

"Will he ready to depart with us by cock-crow,
nephew? We have need of thee in our wars!"

"Yea, Sir," command me," said Hall, but—
he gave one fond look at his daughter, who
knew that his heart had a home again; that
there was something ^{on} to come back to if he
lived, something ^{one} to think upon if he fell
in battle.

"My father, how is it? The little boys & girls
of the ^{peasants} ~~surround~~ play with each other, & I have none
to play with."

The little lady spoke with great precision, the
words came out so clear & sweet, that if you
shut your eyes & made believe very much,
you might fancy every word was a dropping
pearl.

A sad look came into Duke Hall's eyes
as he cipped his dainty-daughter:—

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for hands, smothering else but tight bandages of
fine white linen.

No sooner did the nurse see Duke Noel enter the house,
than she arose, ^{and went to meet him} carrying the baby high in both
hands; kneeling on one knee amongst the
pale-stemmed rushes, she presented the little
girl to her father.

Now the odd thing was, the duke did not know
what to do with a baby: he held out his free-
right-hand flat; & all the nurse could do
was to lay the baby upon it - like a herring on
a dish, for ^{how} ~~she~~ dared ^{she} not instruct her master?

What to do with it next! That was the question.
The baby pucker'd up her small red face, & her
father pucker'd up his tomato, & thought it was
no great thing after all to have a baby.

"Kiss her," said the mother.
So he carried her up to his mouth, lying flat on
his one hand, & smother'd the little gasp in his
feet-curl'd black beard; ^{and} the baby splutter'd
& choked.

"Bring her to me!" called her mother in a
fret-plaint: & mightily glad Noel was to get
rid of his little daughter.

And mightily glad was her mother to get back the
little girl safe & sound, ^{to} ~~so~~ ^{she} coo'd over her,
& cuddled her, & fed her; & by & by, the two went to
sleep.

But before it was light the next morning, Duke
Noel was awakened in the middle of a happy
dream by a terrible sound of wailing. He
rubbed his eyes & sat up in bed, for he thought
to be sure he was dreaming still; but no, the
wides awake he became, the more he heard it, more,

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a ^{thrill} ~~filling~~ cry of grief, now so ~~un~~man-
grief unutterable.
"The mourners!" he cried, his heart-sank
like lead, a chill like the cold of death struck
him ~~to the very~~ bone. He staggered out of his
suits his clothes like a drunken man, but
it was with ~~woe~~, not with wine he was drunk:
there was no need to tell him what had
happened: he knew well enough that it was not
the little new-born baby the mourners were
bewailing. "His bride he shall give" - over &
over & over those words kept ringing in his
ears he could not for the life of him help
saying them to himself.

The door of his chamber was opened cautiously
& Icton the steward of the palace came in
with white face & sorrow-stricken face but
the duke was leaning against the wall like a
man distraught, his lips moving all the time
with the words "His bride he shall give!"
They took his cold hands led him to the
chamber where his lady lay, white & beautiful.
The room was filled with the mourners, beating
their breasts, smearing their bodies, & filling
the palace with their cries of ^{little} grief.

~~Ron Duke Noel!~~
"Oh no! Oh no! Oh no!" went a wailing
through the hall & passage, & the echoes caught
the ~~repeated~~ ^{repeated} "Oh no!" & the flags on
their kennels took up the wail: the air was
filled with sounds of mourning.

Ron Duke Noel!

The Christening.

"And indeed, my lord Icton, 'tis but right - that
my

"Canst you play with your old dad? Writ you
 have one for your mate? Or is my little maid
 tired of her father?"

But he hardly got out the words before his
 mouth was stopp'd with kisses & soft-whist
 arms squeezed his neck hard & big blue
 eyes brimming with tears ~~joyed into his~~ their
 full of ~~grief~~ sad reproach. It was long
 before ~~then~~ her father could comfort - Remind
 Helen: he told her merry tales; & described
 her countries; & clattered of all the fine
 things they would do when she was a grown-up
 princess; but - all the time the child lay still
 & silent in her father's arms without a word
 or a word. Then Noel bethought him that
 a fellow with him was also age the best cure
 for the melancholy which now & then came
 over his little maid: so he ordered her
 white pony, Guinness - the gift of the Queen - to
 be brought round with his own black cap!
 & the least rose-pink of gladness came into
 Helen's cheek as she set her dainty foot in
 the hand of her squire & sprang like a bird
 onto the saddle.

At first the two walked their horses, & there
 was no talk; but - Guinness was quivering
 with the pleasure of the sweet-spring air &
 longed to stretch her legs across the
 plain; how could her mistress hold her
 back from any pleasure? So walk became
 a gallop; horses & riders, horses & riders flew
 over

over the flowing plain, among many tall reeds, & then at last - they drew near. Helena heard the rustle of the sea in her nostrils & the taste of it on her lips & her eyes were dancing & her heart beating for joy in the sea & the earth.

How could she help but be glad? There, right over head, at a great height was a ~~little~~ dark speck, no bigger than a hazel nut - to look at - pouring out of his little throat - such a gust of joy that the fields & the sky were full of it. & the flowers! Now that the horses were walking, she had time to look at them: there were crowds of yellow daffodils nodding in the breeze. Sweet primroses, pink as snow in February, & the blue bells, stretched away among the bushes exactly like a piece of ~~blue~~ sky laid down on the green earth. And that reminded Helena of one of her puzzles: the blue-bells at a distance ~~the sky~~ looked exactly like the sky: now, what if all the sky were really made of blue-bells, & the blue-bells in the wood were just ^{fallen from} some of the seeds dropped down?

But of course that was a question she could not ask her father or anybody: indeed, little girls have a great many puzzles they do not like to speak about. And that reminded her of her little trouble of the morning. & the question she really did wish to ask her father.

"Father, if you will be good, & not say any more thing about - tired of my father, I will tell you about it."

"I must try to be a good boy! What is it that my bell will tell me about?"

"She"

It is a curious fact: that if you wish for anything a great-deal, it generally comes. If you have wished in a cross, discontented way, the thing you have wished for comes, & makes you unhappy: but if you have been good & as the time you were wishing, the thing comes as a gift - & makes you ~~very~~ glad & thankful.

The very next-day after the ride to the shore, a wonderful & delightful thing happened to the princess Helene: she was walking on the terrace with good nurse Gamal, gelling happy enough, because good little girls, whether they be princesses or peasants, are usually happy; in front amongst the flowers she stopped, trying to catch a butterfly in her brodered handkerchief, when, all of a sudden, the light-brick clatter of horse's hoofs caught her ear.

"My father, on Scapel!" she cried, to nurse Gamal, standing breathless, preposses up, in the middle of a bed of gilliflowers.

"No, it can't be my father; it is a lighter horse & a lighter rider. Who can it be?"

And then, all at once, a bright flush spread over her cheek above with the sudden hope.

"Can it, can it be my playfellow!"

And then, sure enough, came cantering into the court, a small, wonderful Arab horse, with the most beautiful boy in his rock that ever a princess dreamed of.

He caught sight of the lovely little lady standing

standing amongst the flowers, just-like those
white marble people who live in gardens. In a
twinkling, he had leapt from his horse, & was
clanking, plumed cap in hand, to address her.

"Do you always live in flower-beds?"

Now Helena had had time to recollect herself,
& answered very quietly, just-like a princess,

"No: only when I wish to catch butterflies."

"Oh, never catch butterflies! you do not know
who they are! But what are you?"

"I do not understand what you mean."

"You are such a beautiful thing," a great deal
prettier than a king-fisher, or a pheasant. I
never saw anything like you. Tell me what
you are!"

"I am a princess, & and - I am a little
girl; is that what you mean?"

"Oh, you are a little girl." I was told there were
little girls. Are there many?"

"There are some little peasant-girls in the
village."

"Are they like you?"

Now this was a hard question for Helena to
answer. She thought she was nicer than the
rough little girls of the village, but she did
not like to say so.

"I don't know," said Helena.

"Don't you know? How funny! I should know in
a minute. Have they hair like daffodils,
& eyes like blue-bells, & a covering as pretty
as a kingfisher's feathers?"

But Helena could not look the beautiful boy
in the face for shame. She had never told a fib
before.

before, what would her father say?

"What a story! I think they'd send some!"

The boy looked bewildered: why did this little girl cast down her eyes & speak in a whisper? What was the matter with her? What did she mean by a story? He didn't know what to say next.

Then Helena looked out of the corners of her eyes to see why he did not speak: & she saw two things, the boy's puzzled face, & that his hair was peppered with a great pearl as big as a pigeon's egg.

"What a beautiful big pearl you have!" she said.

"Yes," said he, "that's the only thing I've got. It shows that I'm a prince, so they call me prince Pearlkin."

"But doesn't your father tell them you're a prince? I haven't got a pearl, but everybody knows I'm princess Helena."

"I haven't got a father. What is a father?"

"Haven't you got a father? Poor little boy!" And Helena's blue eyes filled. "Oh, a father's the beautifullest wisest big man in the world, with black hair like yours & a black horse. But you shall see my father, I have him for your very own, & you shall live with my father & me. Would you like?"

Prince Pearlkin had no time to answer, for that very moment came a louder clatter of hoofs & in rode the duke on his black charger.

He did not know what to make of the pretty prince before him; - his little girl, still amongst the pretty things,